

AMENDMENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 12 and amend the claims as follows:

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) A laser machining method for cutting a semiconductor wafer workpiece by moving the workpiece relative to a laser beam shining means while applying a laser beam to the workpiece by said laser beam shining means, said cutting being accompanied by the generation of debris ~~at the time of cutting the workpiece, which comprises:~~ said method comprising

a protective film coating step of coating a substrate surface of the workpiece where debris deposits with a water-soluble liquid resin and hardening said liquid resin on said substrate surface with the passage of time to thereby form a protective film;

a laser beam shining step of applying a laser beam to the workpiece through said protective film to cut the workpiece; and

a protective film removal step of washing away said protective film together with the debris from said substrate surface by water after completion of said laser beam shining step;

~~wherein said protective film is formed by coating said substrate surface with a liquid resin and allowing the resulting coating to be hardened with the passage of time, and~~

~~wherein said liquid resin is water-soluble.~~

8-12. (Canceled)

13. (New) The laser machining method according to claim 7, wherein said protective film coating step drips said water-soluble liquid resin on a central portion on the surface of the workpiece, and rotates said workpiece, so that said water-soluble liquid resin flows over to the outer peripheral surfaces of said workpiece.